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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SERGIO CORRÊA DA COSTA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL, TO THE IV COMMITTEE ON ITEM 85 - QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR - 22 OCTOBER 1980

IT GIVES THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION GREAT SATISFACTION TO SEE A REPRESENTATIVE OF A SISTER COUNTRY, GUYANA, IN THE CHAIR OF THIS COMMITTEE. KNOWING YOU FOR A LONG TIME, MY DELEGATION IS REASSURED THAT YOU SHALL DISPLAY YOUR EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILL IN DISCHARGING THE RESPONSIBILITIES INCUMBENT UPON YOU.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

TWENTY YEARS AGO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS 1514(XV) AND 1541(XV) WHICH EMBODIED THE ASPIRATIONS OF SO MANY NATIONS AND HELPED TO PAVE THEIR WAY INTO STATEHOOD WITH FREEDOM, HONOUR AND DIGNITY. THE PROCESS THEN INITIATED IS NEARING COMPLETION, IN SPITE OF RETARDING FACTORS THAT STILL PREVENT SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE TO BE FULLY EXERCISED BY PEOPLES THAT REMAIN UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION OR FOREIGN OCCUPATION.

SINCE 1975 THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN SEIZED WITH THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR. DECISIONS ON THE MATTER HAVE ALREADY BEEN ADOPTED BY BOTH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL. DESPITE OCCASIONAL DIFFERENCES IN TONE AND WORDING, ASCRIBED TO SPECIFIC MOMENTARY CIRCUMSTANCES, ALL THOSE DECISIONS HAVE AN UNDISPUTABLE COMMON DENOMINATOR: THEY STRESS THE NEED FOR THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR TO EXERCISE THEIR INALIENABLE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE. THIS IS A RIGHT WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY UNANIMOUSLY RECOGNIZES SHOULD BE ENJOYED BY ALL PEOPLES. THE EAST TIMORESE PEOPLE SHOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE AN EXCEPTION. FOR US, IN BRAZIL, THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IS NOT ONLY AN ABSTRACT NOTION. IT BEARS A CONCRETE MEANING, APPLICABLE TO CONCRETE SITUATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

SHARING WITH THE EAST TIMORESE PEOPLE A COMMON CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND THE SAME LANGUAGE, WE, BRAZILIANS, CAN MORE EASILY UNDERSTAND THE DESIRE OF THAT PEOPLE TO HAVE ITS IDENTITY POLITICALLY REFLECTED. MOREOVER, WE ARE AWARE THAT THE HUMANITATIRAN ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM REQUIRE URGENT ACTION.

LAST YEAR'S RESOLUTION 34/40, ADOPTED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION, CALLED UPON ALL PARTIES CONCERNED "TO FACILITATE THE ENTRY INTO THE TERRITORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AID IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE THE SUFFERING OF THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR" AND IT FURTHER REQUESTED THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES TO RENDER ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR, PARTICULARLY THE CHILDREN AND THOSE SEEKING TO LEAVE FOR ANOTHER COUNTRY FOR PURPOSES OF FAMILY REUNION.

WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING SOME POSITIVE STEPS TAKEN DURING THE MONTHS THAT HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 34/40, WE BELIEVE THAT MUCH STILL REMAINS TO BE DONE. WE CALL UPON THOSE WHO ARE IN A POSITION TO FACILITATE ALLEVIATING THE SUFFERINGS AND HARDSHIPS OF THE POPULATION IN EAST TIMOR TO DO SO IN A HUMANITARIAN SPIRIT AND WITH NO FURTHER DELAY.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

MY DELEGATION HAS NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE ISSUANCE ON 12 OCTOBER, OF A COMMUNIQUÉ BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF PORTUGAL ON THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR. WE HOPE THAT THE PORTUGUESE INITIATIVE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACEFUL AND SPEEDY SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM UNDER CONSIDERATION.

IN THE MEANTIME, LET ME ALSO EXPRESS, ON THE BASIS OF BRAZIL'S TRADITIONAL AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH INDONESIA, OUR CONFIDENCE IN HER GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO FACILITATE, BY ALL MEANS, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR.